

Message Text

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71-60
ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 IO-11 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /057 W
----- 017745

R 151713Z MAR 76
FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 757
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 2610

FOR ARA LABOR ADVISER O'GRADY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, AR
SUBJECT: CGT DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE ORIT QUESTION

REFS: (A) EC BRUSSELS 2580, (B) BUENOS AIRES 1638

1. SUMMARY: DURING THE MARCH 11-12 MEETING OF THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG, ARGENTINE CGT LEADER CARRANZA FLOATED A CGT "FORMULA" FOR REORGANIZING THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT). WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL BUT CONVERSATIONS WITH CARRANZA, ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY ETCHEVERRY AND VARIOUS ICFTU SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT CARRANZA MAY HAVE BEEN GIVING THE PROPOSAL AN ICFTU TEST RUN BEFORE ITS UNVEILING AT THE PROPOSED MEETING BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND CGT REPRESENTATIVES IN URUGUAY MENTIONED REFTEL B. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MISSION HAS LEARNED "ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS" FROM ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY ETCHEVERRY THAT LAST WEEK IN LUXEMBOURG THE ARGENTINE CGT PRESENTED TO THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT A PROPOSAL FOR REORGANIZING THE ORIT ALONG LINES WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CGT TO AFFILIATE AND TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE ARGENTINE "FORMULA" CALLS FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF ORIT
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BUT IT ALSO CALLS FOR THE CREATION OF THREE DISTINCT REGIONS IN THE HEMISPHERE OBVIOUSLY CALCULATED TO INCREASE THE CGT'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, PARTICULARLY IN SOUTH AMERICA. ACCORDING TO ETCHEVERRY THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL CALLS FOR SET-

TING UP REGIONS AS FOLLOWS: REGION I, US, CANADA, MEXICO AND PUERTO RICO WITH REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN MEXICO. REGION II, CENTRAL AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN WITH HEADQUARTERS TO BE DECIDED BY UNIONS OF THE REGION AND REGION III, ALL OF SOUTH AMERICA WITH HEADQUARTERS IN BUENOS AIRES.

3. IN OUR SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH CARRANZA HE SEEMED TO CAREFULLY AVOID MAKING ANY REFERENCE TO HAVING SUBMITTED SUCH A PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, HE DID PRESENT THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO WHICH TENDS TO CONFIRM THAT AN INITIATIVE HAS BEEN TAKEN. CARRANZA SAIS THAT HIS PRESENCE AT THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING SIGNIFIED COMPLETION OF THE SECOND STEP IN CGT STRATEGY TO ESTABLISH ITSELF IN THE DEMOCRATIC INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE FIRST "STEP", HE SAID, WAS TO BEEF UP CGT PARTICIPATION IN THE ILO. THIS, HE SAYS, HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND THAT NOW WITH CGT MEMBERSHIP IN THE ICFTU ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT, THAT THE STAGE HAS BEEN SET FOR THE THIRD STEP, "ACTIVE PARTICIPATION, ALONGSIDE THE AFL-CIO IN A CONTINENT-WIDE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION." HE SAID THIS WOULD INVOLVE SOME "ADJUSTMENTS" ON THE PART OF THE AFL-CIO AS WELL AS THE CGT. WHILE HE MENTIONED THE NEED TO CHANGE THE NAME OF ORIT, HOWEVER, HE DID NOT REFER TO THE CGT'S PROPOSED REGIONALIZATION OF ORIT.

4. ICFTU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY VANDERVECKEN TOLD US, ALSO CONFIDENTIALLY, THAT THE ARGENTINES DID SUGGEST A FORMULA FOR RESOLVING THE ORIT ISSUE, BUT THAT IT WAS INFORMAL AND EXPLORATORY IN NATURE AND REPRESENTED AN EXPRESSION OF CGT INTENT TO NEGOTIATE CONDITIONS FOR CGT ADMISSION TO THE ORIT WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE AFL-CIO AND TO THE LATIN AMERICAN UNIONS AND WOULD ALSO BE PALATABLE TO THE MAIN BODY OF PERONIST LABOR AT HOME. VANDERVECKEN ADDED THAT CARRANZA EMPHASIZED THAT THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE AFL-CIO IN THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION WAS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR CGT MEMBERSHIP; IF THE AMERICANS ARE OUT THE CGT WILL NOT COME IN. VANDERVECKEN REITERATED THAT THE ICFTU CONTINUES TO FAVOR AFL-CIO MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORIT AND ALSO THAT THE MINORITY CONFIDENTIAL

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OF ICFTU AFFILIATES OPPOSED TO THE AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY AND SCANDINAVIAN TRADE UNION LEADERS. VANDERVECKEN SAID THAT THE ICFTU HAS ADOPTED A HANDS OFF POLICY ON THE QUESTION OF ORIT REORGANIZATION.

5. COMMENT. FROM BRUSSELS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE ARGENTINES, LIKE THE VENEZUELANS, WANT TO REDIVIDE THE ORIT PIE AND WANT THE LARGEST PIECE IN TERMS OF BEING ABLE TO EXPAND THEIR AREA OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE ARGENTINE REGIONALIZATION FORMULA WILL FLOAT WELL WITH THE VENEZUELANS OR WITH THE MEXICANS; NOR IS IT LIKELY THAT THEIR QUEST FOR A NAME CHANGE WILL GO DOWN WELL WITH THE AMERICANS AND THE MEXICANS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS SEEMS

TO BE ONE OF THE MOST REALISTIC ARGENTINE INITIATIVES EVER
MADE IN TERMS OF THE CGT COMING TO GRIPS WITH ITS LONG ISO-
LATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE POSSI-
BILITY OF ITS BEARING FRUIT SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR RELATIONS, TEXT ON MICROFILM ONLY, MEETINGS, REORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ECBRU02610
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DECLASSIFIED PER MEMO P890136-0594, DELETED ACCESSION #D760097-0914,
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P890136-0610
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197603116/baaaesdc.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SIL
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <01 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CGT DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE ORIT QUESTION
TAGS: ELAB, AR, XM, ICFTU, INTERAMERICAN REG ORG OF WORKERS, ORIT
To: STATE INFO BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006